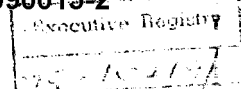


Repts 6



30 December 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: D/DCI/IC

SUBJECT: Secrecy and Compartmentation --
An Action Proposal

REFERENCE: DCI/IC 75-057, Same Subject,
Dated 16 December 1975

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1. Thank you for your provocative idea of 16 December. I certainly approve 100% your effort to break through the bureaucratic problems which have encrusted this matter. I would suggest that you add to your group someone who is politically sensitive to Executive, Congressional and other requirements for access to intelligence, such as [redacted] to be sure that the interests of the clients are represented.

2. I would also like to propose an outline of an approach to this problem for your consideration and comment during your session. In essence it would separate protection of sources from protection of product. The concept is that we would indoctrinate all intelligence officers as to the distinction and indicate that the sole interest of intelligence is to protect the source. Any protection of the product should rest upon other grounds, e.g., the diplomatic or political difficulties which would be engendered by its revelation.

3. The protection of sources should be accomplished by generalized source descriptions, by writing material without quotations from individual messages and from highly compartmented security systems. These systems would permit compartmented access to individuals who need to know actual source identities, actual messages, technical details and similar matters which could reveal a specific source or capability vulnerable to counteraction. Primarily those with access would be at the working intelligence level, although some few, hopefully, senior officials would

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have to be given broad access over such types of material because of their own importance in decision-making, e.g., the President, Secretary of State, or because of a necessity that technical customers be informed of raw technical data which inevitably could pinpoint the source.

4. The second major category would be the product. This would still be considered as classified on many occasions, but the classification would be justified because of the diplomatic impact of revealing the material. because the material is a working paper or advisory to decision-makers or because it reveals the assessments on our side of certain matters on which the degree of our knowledge should not be known by our adversaries. However, the product should be produced in a form which does not necessarily reveal the specific source involved (although it could reveal that we have some source) and consequently could be given broader distribution to customers. Much of this material leaks to public attention today through background briefings (e.g., the Soviet strategic weapons estimates). There would be considerable gain in this process, however, in the fact that the intelligence officer consciously would write his product for customers from whom the specific source should be concealed. This would impel the intelligence officer to consider more seriously the protection of his sources in his writing (comparable to the journalist) rather than counting on the classification system to protect them, e.g., with respect to direct GAMMA quotes or other highly revealing specifics.

5. This procedure would also be consistent with the concept behind our new sources and methods legislation, in that only those who consciously assume the obligation of protecting the sources through secrecy agreement would be given access to the source category of information, while the product category could be spread more broadly through the bureaucracy to customers who need it but do not need to know the detailed sources involved. It is just plain impractical to believe that we can get the necessary secrecy agreements from all the customers who need our product, but it should be possible to get them from those having any need to know the sources.

6. I realize this subject is a lot more complicated than indicated, but I offer this as a concept for further study and definition. It certainly couldn't be worse than what we have today.

W. E. Colby
Director

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DCI/IC 75-057

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Secrecy and Compartmentation --
An Action Proposal

1. The attached action study proposal was developed by an ad hoc group, consisting of the Chairmen of COMIREX, SIGINT, Security, and Human Resources Committees, aided by Hank Knoche and [redacted] and benefitting from some sage input from Ed Proctor.

2. In brief, the proposal is to have a small group of senior intelligence officers (such as Proctor, CIA; [redacted] NSA; [redacted] DIA; Wilson, IC Staff; and possibly Saunders, State/INR) seclude themselves for several days to focus uninterruptedly on our present problem of secrecy and compartmentation. The group would be armed with the relevant recent studies on this subject and would follow the general guidelines articulated in the attached proposal to develop a detailed conceptual approach to the problem. Following your approval of the concept for planning purposes, we would move sequentially through the successive phases as iterated in our proposed approach.

3. If you approve this suggestion, we are prepared to move out.

[redacted]
Lieutenant General, USA
D/DCI/IC

Attachment
As stated

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